

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 00178 100835Z

15

ACTION PM-07

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 0178

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MARR, ASN, US, AS

SUBJ: NPW VISITS TO AUSTRALIA

REF: (A) CANBERRA 0049; (B) STATE 001819

1. AT EMBASSY SUGGESTION CONGRESSMAN CRAIG HOSMER OF JCAE, ACCOMPANIED BY CHARGE, CALLED UPON ADOD ACTING SECRETARY GORDON BLAKERS JANUARY 9 FOR DISCUSSION OF NPW VISITS TO AUSTRALIAN PORTS. OTHER SENIOR ADOD AND DFA OFFICIALS ALSO PRESENT.

2. BLAKERS OUTLINED IMPEDIMENTS TO RESUMPTION OF NPW VISITS:

- A. NEW STRENGTH OF ENVIRONMENTALISTS COMPLICATED ISSUE;
 - B. CERTAIN LIABILITY PROBLEMS UNRESOLVED;
 - C. STATE AND INDIVIDUAL PORT AUTHORITIES HAD INDEPENDENT PREROGATIVES AND MUST BE SATISFIED;
 - D. GOA COULD NOT SIMPLY CITE AMERICAN ASSURANCES BUT WOULD HAVE TO CITE AUSTRALIAN EXPERT REVIEW OF HAZARDS; ADDITIONAL DATA FROM USN WOULD PROBABLY BE REQUIRED;
 - E. MOST IMPORTANTLY, FRENCH ATMOSPHERIC TESTS WERE AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL ISSUE IN AUSTRALIA; GOA LEGAL ADVISORS BELIEVED THAT RESUMPTION NPW VISITS COULD PREJUDICE AUSTRALIAN CASE AGAINST
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PAGE 02 CANBER 00178 100835Z

FRANCE PENDING IN INTERNATIONAL COURT.

3. CONGRESSMAN HOSMER MADE STRONG CASE FOR NPW VISITS. HE CITED TWO DECADES OF INCIDENT-FREE US EXPERIENCE AND CHALLENGED ANALOGY BETWEEN ATMOSPHERIC TESTING AND NAVAL REACTORS. HE SAID AMERICAN SAILORS WERE WORKING IN PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEANS FOR COMMON DEFENSE OF US AND AUSTRALIA AND SURELY DESERVED OPPORTUNITY FOR REST IN AUSTRALIAN PORTS. HE CONCLUDED THAT HE HAD NO ILLUSIONS THAT HIS RAISING OF SUBJECT TO CLARIFY US CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES WOULD RESOLVE AUSTRALIAN PROBLEMS, BUT HE DID WANT TO MAKE CLEAR THAT HE FELT STRONGLY ABOUT THIS SUBJECT.

4. BLAKERS ASSURED HOSMER THAT ADOD SUPPORTED FULLY HIS POSITION AND WOULD CONTINUE TO ARGUE FOR IT. HE FEARED THAT ICJ CASE MIGHT DRAG FOR MANY MONTHS DURING WHICH THERE WAS LITTLE CHANCE OF AFFIRMATIVE GOA POSITION. HOWEVER, ADOD WOULD CONTINUE TO CLEAR AWAY THE OTHER PROBLEMS SO THAT AN AFFIRMATIVE DECISION COULD BE REACHED AS SOON AS THE ATMOSPHERIC TESTING ASPECT WAS RESOLVED.

5. BLAKERS MENTIONED HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT USN OPERATED UNDER SYSTEM OF GRADED RESTRICTIONS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF REACTOR AND PROXIMITY OF POPULATION FOR NPW VISITS IN CONUS. ALTHOUGH NOT DIRECTLY CONTRADICTING THIS POINT, HOSMER EMPHASIZED FREQUENCY OF NPW VISITS TO HEAVILY POPULATED AREAS SUCH AS LONG BEACH AND SAN FRANCISCO HARBOR.

6. MEETING ENDED AMICABLY, WITH HOSMER SAYING THAT IF AUSTRALIANS FOUND HIM INSISTENT UPON THIS SUBJECT IT WAS ONLY BECAUSE THEY HAD NOT YET BEEN VISITED BY ADMIRAL ROCKOVER, WHOM HOSMER WOULD SUGGEST CALL UPON THEM.
HARROP

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